

I AM A LEADER

FUNDERS REPORT 2013—IMPACT

INTRODUCTION

I Am A Leader Foundation is dedicated to providing programs and services that build students' character and leadership in schools throughout the United States. We believe in the potential of every child and youth to be a leader—to discover their unique strengths and gifts, to lead lives of integrity and great service, and to contribute to their families, communities, and future careers.

We have searched for the world's best programs with a proven track record of improving the lives of students by developing their leadership skills and character. After considering programs capable of being scaled nationally and globally, one stands out as the unquestioned leader: *The Leader in Me*, based on the life work and leadership research of the late Dr. Stephen R. Covey and offered by FranklinCovey. Based on *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *The Leader in Me* produces transformational results such as fewer discipline problems and increased engagement among teachers and parents, while equipping students with the self-confidence and skills they need to thrive in the 21st century.

In order to carry out its charitable mission and objectives, the Foundation offers grants to highly qualified schools with principals, teachers, staff, district-level leadership, and parents who have a strong interest and commitment toward long-term implementation of the process.

In 2012, the Foundation issued grants to 68 elementary and middle schools located throughout the United States. The results presented here provide early indications of positive impacts being realized in the schools after only one year of *The Leader in Me* implementation during school year 2012–2013.

ASSESSING IMPACT

In an effort to assess whether *The Leader in Me* had impact on the character and leadership skills in students, we looked at two sources of data: discipline referrals and the views of school staff captured in a survey. We are pleased to share these early findings that we believe will result in a positive, long-term impact on students.

Discipline-referral data was available for about 90 percent of I Am A Leader Foundation-sponsored schools. In addition to collecting 2012–2013 data, information was also gathered for the two previous years to have a baseline for comparison. This data was gathered from each school's principal.

We also wanted to know how school staff felt *The Leader in Me* was affecting their school and students. Pre- and post-implementation surveys were gathered from school staff, and results compared baseline (summer 2012) to post-implementation (summer 2013) responses, and are shown as mean scores. The survey-assessment areas were student leadership skills, staff leadership skills, student engagement, school climate, and parent involvement. All 21 survey items showed improvement—18 are statistically significant at a 99 percent confidence level. Staff at the 64 schools was surveyed, for a total of 2,033 respondents. The staff included teachers, non-teaching staff, and administrators (Figure 1). The school group included 58 elementary and 6 middle schools (Figure 2). The 64 schools have a total student population of 31,300.

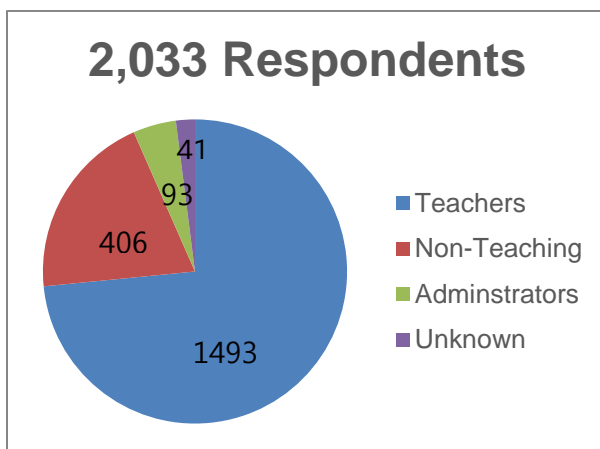


Figure 1. Survey Respondents

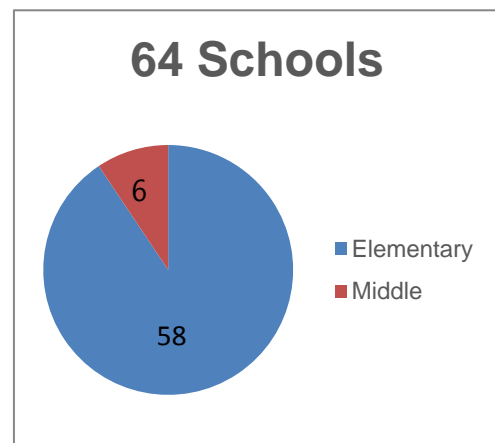


Figure 2. School Types Represented

DISCIPLINE REFERRALS

School data shows that discipline referrals dropped meaningfully during the first year of implementation: the school year 2012–2013 had 24 percent fewer discipline referrals than 2011–2012 (Figure 3). The trend from the 2010–2011 to 2011–2012 school year showed a slight increase in discipline referrals, so this drop in referrals is a very positive result.

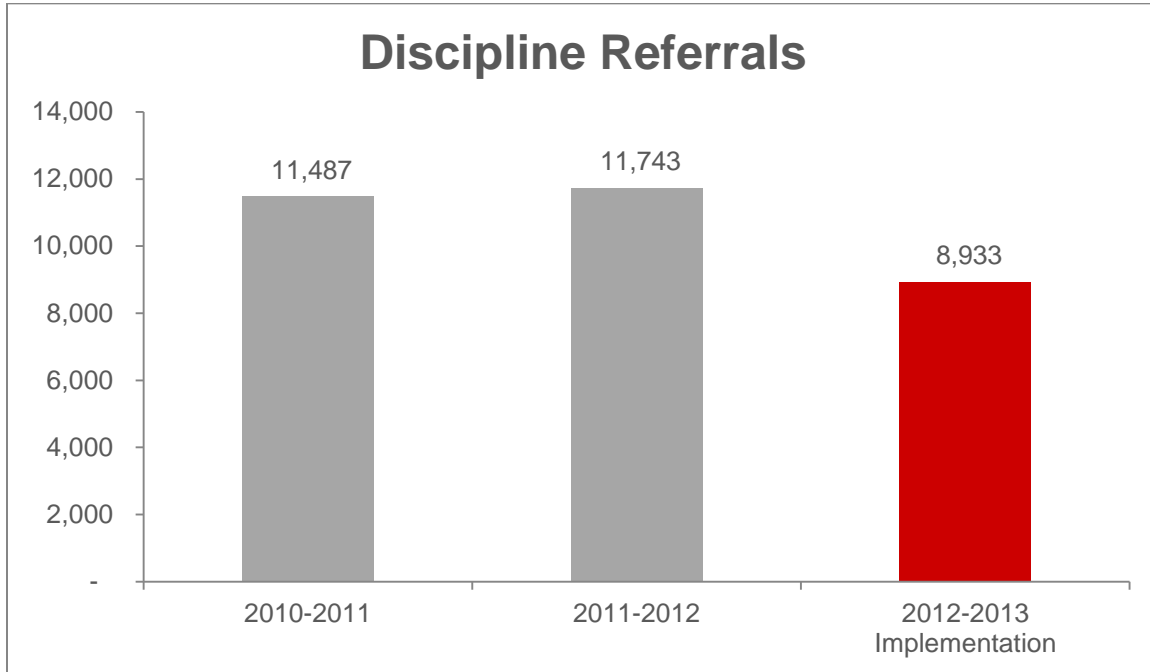


Figure 3. Discipline Referrals

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Student Leadership Skills

We believe schools should provide opportunities for students to develop their full leadership potential in addition to offering quality academics. *The Leader in Me* schools empower students to live up to their potential by encouraging development of individual talents as well as teaching the leadership skills necessary for lifelong success. As shown in Figure 4, staff reports an increase in student learning of leadership/life skills such as goal planning, taking responsibility of their learning, and teamwork.

As a whole, students...

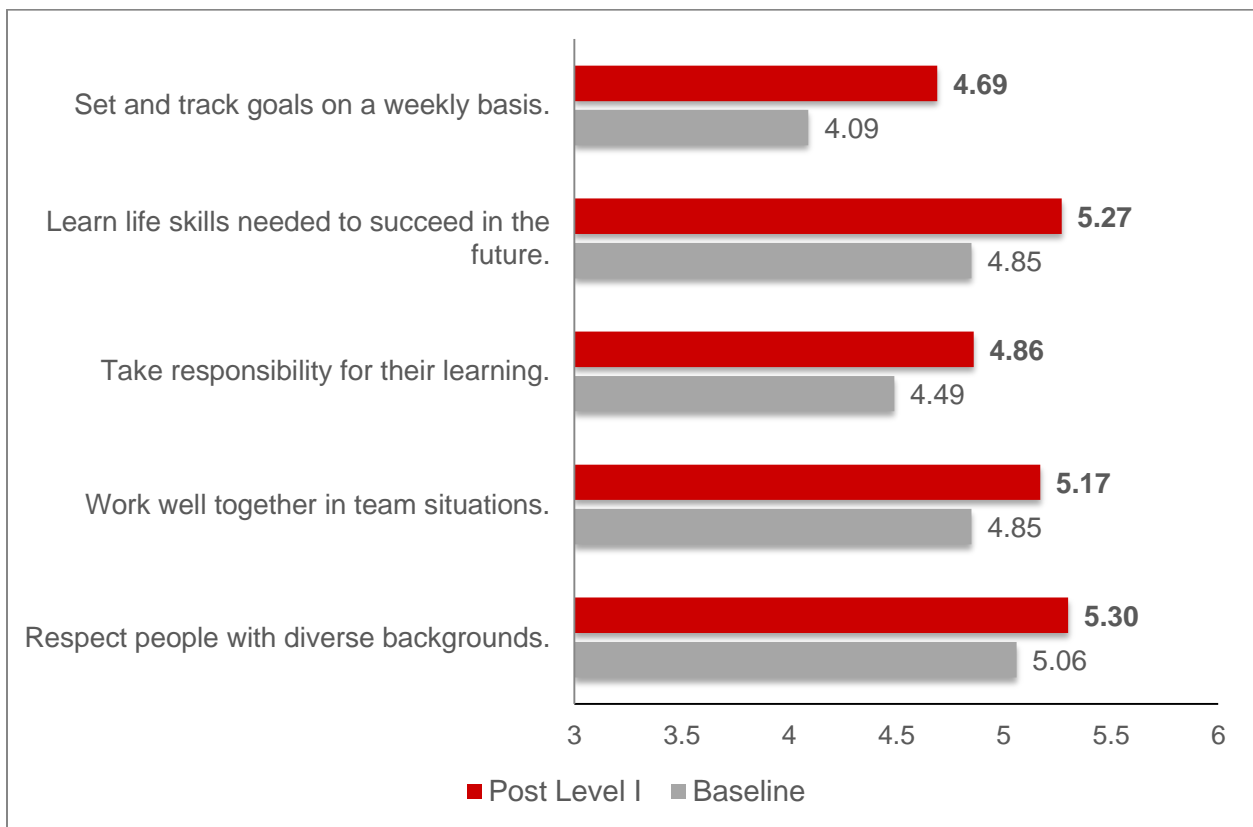


Figure 4. Student Leadership Skills

Staff Leadership Skills

The process is not only affecting student leadership skills but also the leadership skills of staff. Staff has the ability and responsibility to guide, teach, and inspire children while at school. Therefore, staff satisfaction is a key component in the holistic approach taken with *The Leader in Me*. Known as "inside out," the process first addresses the individual and then how the individual can affect situations and others. Many staff members have shared stories with us about how the process is helping them become more organized and self-reflective; and in turn, they are better equipped to lead through example. Figure 5 shows staff's perspective on their personal growth experienced through the school year.

As a whole, I personally...

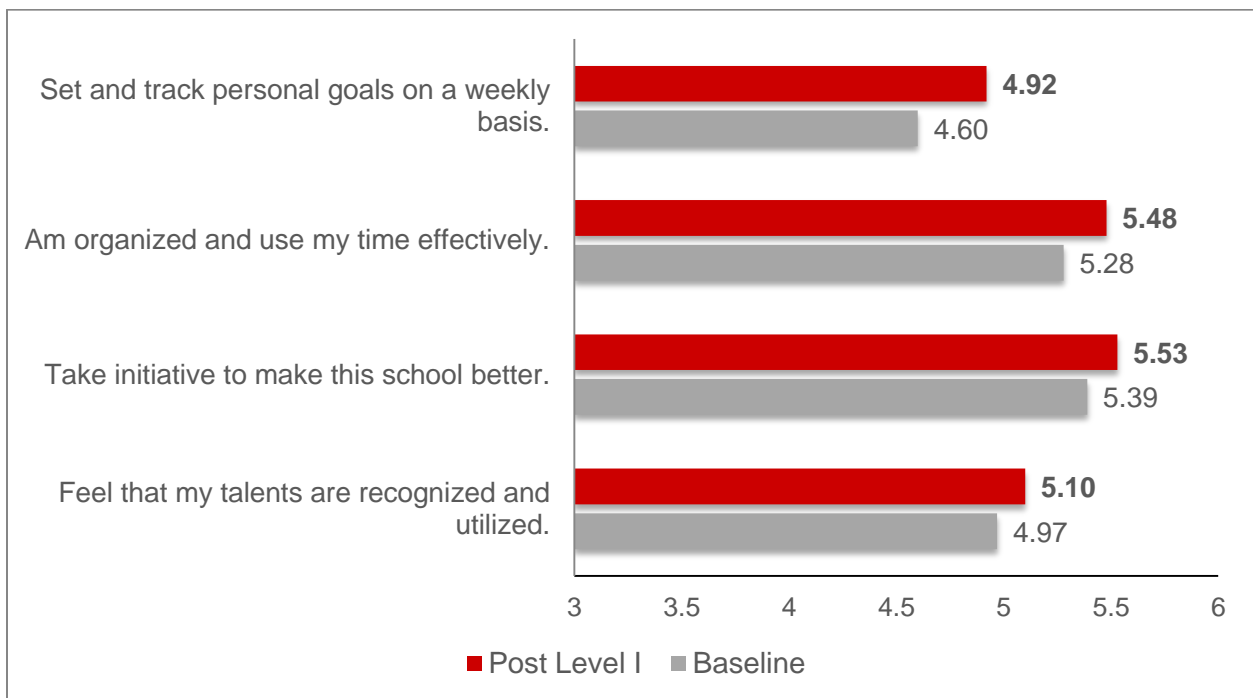


Figure 5. Staff Leadership Skills

CULTURE

Student Engagement

By building character and leadership, students become more engaged. As shown in Figure 6, staff reports that students are developing their unique talents and being given opportunities to demonstrate them.

As a whole, students...

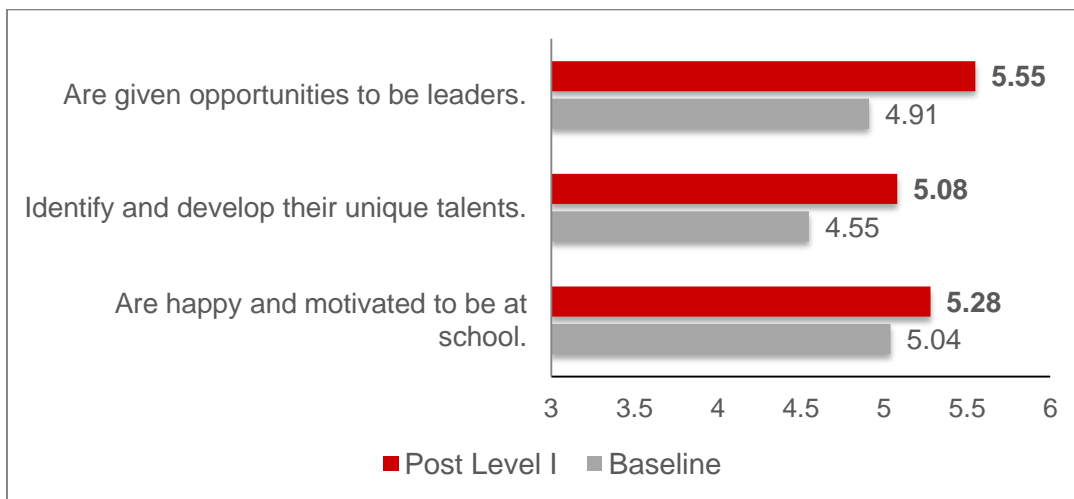


Figure 6. Student Engagement

School Climate

The Leader in Me is also having an effect on school climate (Figure 7). An important part of school transformation includes developing a mission statement and establishing a climate of leadership. Each school creates its own idea of a “vibrant and inspiring physical environment,” such as adding inspiring quotes to the walls and, in some cases, pulling staff, parents, and community members together to repaint hallways and classrooms. It is an opportunity for the unique personality of each school to come to life.

As a whole, the school...

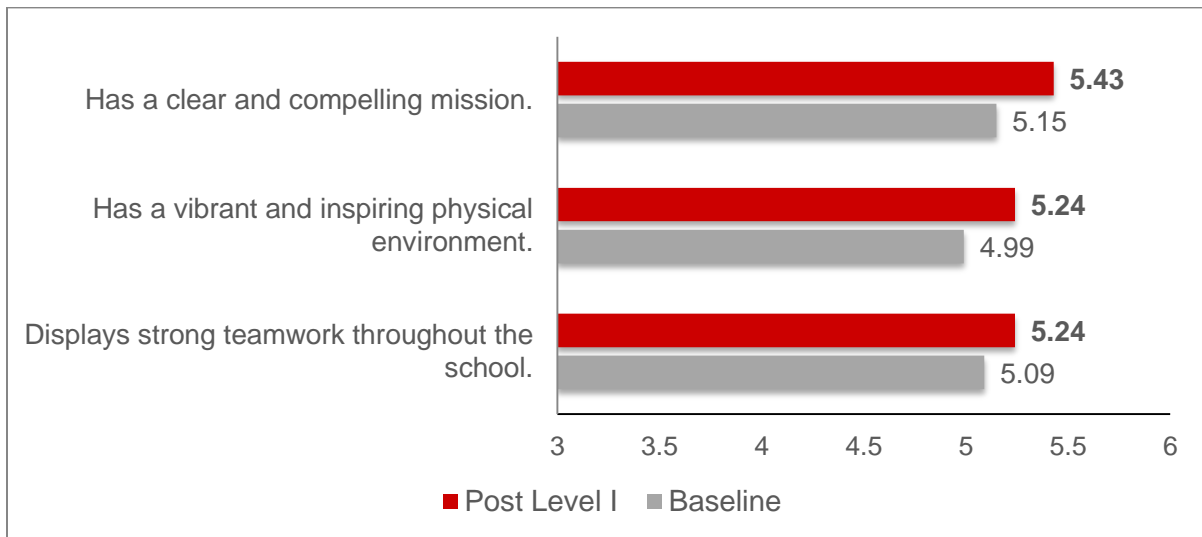


Figure 7. School Climate

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in the school is invaluable to a student’s success. We know through observation and conversation that schools experiencing the most success implementing *The Leader in Me* are doing so with strong buy-in and support from the parent population. Overall, staff reports an improvement in parent satisfaction and involvement (Figure 8).

As a whole, parents...

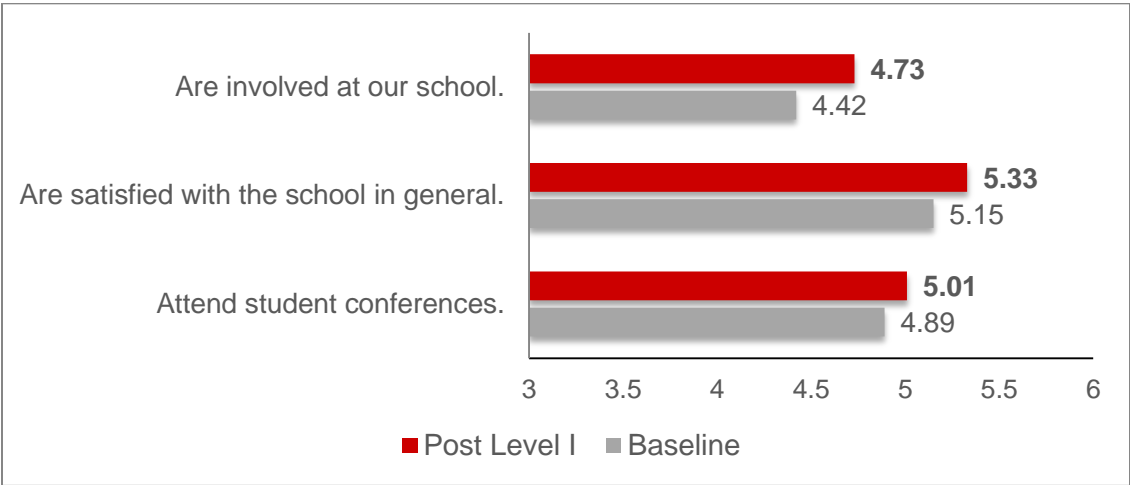


Figure 8. Parent Involvement

CONCLUSION

We are pleased with the progress of schools so far. *The Leader in Me* appears to be building both character and leadership in students in only one year of implementation. It also seems to be positively affecting staff and parents. These early indicators of success are very encouraging as we work together to unleash the potential of every child.